

## Fine Arts



**Mrs. Jane Carlson '72**

Mrs. Jane (Kennedy) Carlson is a 1972 graduate of Beresford High School. During her high school years, Jane was active in chorus, band, oral interp, student council, Beresonian co-editor, all school plays, senior class plays, and musicals. She earned declam awards at the region level, was a member of the Homecoming Royalty, and was selected for All-State Chorus. During her high school years, Jane played some “mean” cymbals in band and contributed to the fine arts by taking roles in all offered productions, plays and musicals.

After high school, Jane attended the University of South Dakota (USD). She graduated from USD in 1977 with both an Elementary Education and Special Education degrees. In 1977, the USD School of Education awarded her the “Outstanding Graduate in Special Education.” She earned his Master’s in Education from USD in 1996.

Mrs. Carlson taught Language Arts and Reading at Beresford Elementary School from 1988 through 2014. She also directed the Homecoming variety show, theater productions, and musicals at Beresford High School. Mrs. Carlson was a member of the Beresford Education Association, the South Dakota Education Association, and the National Education Association. During the 2006-07 school year, she was a mentor for South Dakota Reads—Innovative Literacy Initiative. That year, she presented literacy workshops locally, regionally, and statewide. She was awarded the “Outstanding Mentor Award” by SD Reads. Mrs. Carlson was a member of the state committee that developed the SD Language Arts Content Standards. She initiated the Pen-pals with Bethesda program that has been going for thirty years.

Mrs. Carlson has been the heart of both the activity and energy of the Beresford Area Arts (BAA) for the past three decades. She, along with a few others, rescued the BAA from extinction and revived it into a viable and essential community organization. She served selflessly as the chairperson of the organization and continuously provided the Beresford area with quality arts programs. Chief among the list of gifts to the community include a steady stream of outstanding musicals and theatrical productions. Shows such as Oklahoma, Fiddler on the Roof, Guys and Dolls, Mary Poppins, Scrooge and The Wizard of Oz have all been under Jane's direction and have continuously delighted local audiences both young and old.

Recently, the Beresford Area Arts has undergone a reorganization and Jane has become the executive director of the organization. Under her guidance, the BAA has expanded its offerings to the community to include children's theater, a summer concert series in the park, visual arts classes, author's visits, holiday programs, garden tours, history tours, and a host of other unique events that celebrate the arts in the Beresford community. Teaching and children have always been first in Jane's heart. So, the addition of community opportunities for children's theatre in Beresford and establishing scholarships for area students interested in theatre to attend theatre camp are also highlights of Jane's tenure as a leader in the arts movement in our community.

Jane's pedigree in the arts is strong and much has been said, and should be said, about Jane's mother, Mrs. Grace (Kylling) Kennedy and their influence in the arts in the Beresford community. That love for the arts and the ability to put that passion into action has been passed down from mother to daughter. Jane's list of accomplishments in the arts and the influence she has had on this community have been unrivaled over the past three decades.

Mrs. Carlson directed the children's choir at Brooklyn Church and taught Sunday school for many years.

Helen Keller once said, "The best and most beautiful things in the world cannot be seen or even touched—they must be felt with the heart." Beresford is a much better place because of Jane Carlson's steady and unwavering dedication to the arts and along the way, she has led us all to feel with our heart.

Congratulations to our Watchdog Hall of Fame Fine Arts inductee, Mrs. Jane (Kennedy) Carlson!

